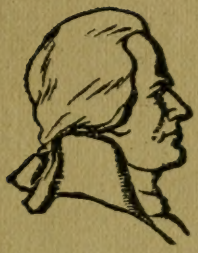
3 1761 07488431 3

EcC
M6896

EaC
M6896

[Modern business Talks]

PUTTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

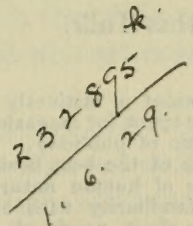


MODERN BUSINESS
TALK No. 11

ALEXANDER HAMILTON INSTITUTE
NEW YORK

Putting the Message Across

Number Eleven of a Series of Modern Business Talks Prepared by the Alexander Hamilton Institute



ALEXANDER HAMILTON INSTITUTE
NEW YORK

Copyright, 1917, by Alexander Hamilton Institute
Copyrighted in Great Britain, 1917
All rights reserved

READING ASSIGNMENT
NUMBER ELEVEN

"It is estimated that there are at least twenty thousand general advertisers and about one million local advertisers in the United States."—Page 3, Chapter I, Volume 6 of the MODERN BUSINESS Text.

(1) Read this Talk on "Putting the Message Across." It discusses some of the practical problems that confront the person who tries to work out an advertising plan and get his message down on paper and into print.

(2) Read Chapters I to XI (Pages 1-174) of "Advertising Principles" which is Volume 6 of the MODERN BUSINESS Text.

(3) Read with care Lecture No. 6 which accompanies this Talk.

The present is distinctly an advertising age. Enormous sums of money are spent for magazine and newspaper space and for a hundred other forms of publicity. The advertising profession is drawing to itself some of the best brains of the country. Originality of mind, knowledge of human nature, ability to use forceful and attractive English, familiarity with economic processes and with commercial usages—in short, nearly all the knowledge and power of man's mind is turned to profitable use in the design and construction of advertising literature. Whether one regards it merely as a valuable accomplishment or looks upon it with a desire for the material rewards that it offers, advertising is an art that deserves our serious attention.

"No man ever found a happy life by chance, or yawned it into being with a wish."—ROBERT CECIL.

Putting the Message Across

> *"The advertiser requires an intimate knowledge of the operations of the human mind. Advertising has in fact been defined as 'the operation of one mind upon another in marketing a product or service.'* "—Page 92, Chapter VII, Volume 6 of the MODERN BUSINESS Text.

"Just look at that advertisement," exclaimed a woman to her companion, pointing to a large poster near the door in the street car in which they were riding. "Isn't it too absurd for anything?"

The advertisement in question was that of a well-known baking company. It pictured a charming breakfast scene with Mr. Newlywed in the act of eating a piece of appetizing toast. "He's actually holding the toast with his fingers right in the butter!" The rippling laughter with which the critic concluded her remarks was joined in by all who sat near enough to hear her words.

"But there is another almost as bad," remarked her companion. "Breakfast food served with oranges in the month of August when peaches and cantaloupes are at their best and oranges at their worst!"

"Yes," consented the first speaker, "and if the breakfast food is as old as the style of dress shown in the picture, I shouldn't care to eat of it for fear of weevils! I wonder why the advertisers don't study women's ways a little more. Only last night I saw

in the *Ladies' Home Journal* the picture of a woman varnishing a chair in the parlor on her fine rug. A man might do such a foolish thing, but a woman—never!"

Realism, Good and Bad

It might have been a good thing for the advertisers had they overheard that criticism of their publicity efforts. Realism is no doubt valuable in advertising, but when an attempt at realism fails to carry conviction, it becomes ludicrous and the reaction is unfavorable.

An enterprising New York clothier undertook to show three well-known financiers walking up Fifth Avenue faultlessly attired in the advertiser's $18 suits. It is very doubtful that his advertisement produced conviction. It is different, of course, with the "Spotless Town" ads and with the "Gold Dust Twins"—they are frankly fiction. The same might be said of other popular creations of advertising art.

Realism of another kind is seen in those underwear advertisements which show us Brother James attired in a perfect union suit, winning the hurdle race, or Pa and Ma, Uncle Bob and Sister Julia unconventionally disporting themselves in Blank's cosy knit unions. Evidently the advertisers of these goods find this a profitable form of publicity, since they continue it from year to year.

The attempt at showing the universality of the union suit reminds one of a poster which some years ago could be seen in certain parts of the country telling

the reader that a certain brand of chewing plug tobacco was "positively used by all the crown heads of Europe," and showing among the highly colored pictures of these "crown heads" one of Queen Victoria of England. Evidently certain things can be overdone.

Agreement of text and illustration, plenty of good taste and common sense—this is a winning combination in advertising.

Naturalness in the Ad

When a certain manufacturer of bookcases and office equipment decided to introduce the human figure in the advertising of his goods, he arranged to photograph living, walking and talking people. So he set the stage and placed the bookcases and filing equipment at just the right angle and in the right light. So far the task was simple. But where could he get the people who were to pose? The ordinary person, when placed before the camera, assumes a strange, self-conscious look, and that, of course, would never do. So the manager sought the aid of some of the star performers of the moving picture shows—real actors, who could look and act natural on any occasion. An attractive and versatile actress was found who demonstrated the ease with which the bookcases could be handled, by herself holding a section of one in her arms. A "movie" hero in the role of a prosperous business man demonstrated the

simplicity of the filing equipment; and a real home touch was given the sectional bookcase ads by the presence of a clever little girl aged five. From the pages in that company's catalog and in the magazine ads the appearance of these artists is probably as convincing as the copy itself.

Another advertiser, the manufacturer of an automobile device, in seeking to make his advertising convincing, goes about the matter in a somewhat different way. He takes the ad men thru the factory, lets them study the product, talk with the shop foreman and with the salesmen so as to absorb as much first-hand information about the product as possible. The ads when written are put to a final and severe test before they are sent out. They are hung about the factory and the office to be read and criticized by the people who produce the goods. Copy that will not stand this test is unceremoniously rejected. "The advertisements," says the manager, "must carry truth and sincerity if they are to command the respect and approval of our people."

Such methods are usually too slow and laborious for the man who believes in dashing off extravagantly-worded copy, flashing his message before the multitude in the hope of getting rich quick.

> *Copy has been called the soul of advertising. It represents the thought and feeling that has gone into the work.*

The present reading assignment discusses the principles of advertising chiefly from the standpoint

of copy and display. The purpose of modern advertising and the fundamental considerations that must precede an advertising campaign are set forth in Chapters I and II. No one will question after reading these chapters that advertising is a powerful agent for promoting business and that effective advertising requires a careful study of a number of factors that are not apparent to a superficial observer.

In Chapter III, the important subject of attracting the reader's attention by means of headlines and illustrations is discussed. This is really one of the chief problems of the magazine or newspaper advertiser. Such advertiser endeavors by a thoro analysis of his product and his markets to determine what points should be strongly featured and by what means these points could be made most effective.

Finding the Chief Talking Point

As a rule, careful analysis develops an abundance of talking points, but this fact gives rise to another difficulty, namely, that of selection. You can't feature them all. Some time ago a New York manufacturer of varnishes was talking over this question with his advertising agent. He had just brought out a new varnish of superior quality and wanted to know how best to advertise it. The varnish was quick-drying, hard and tough. These merits the manufacturer declared should be driven home in the advertising. But the advertising men demurred They believed that of the three factors to be considered in an advertising message—the writer, the

subject and the reader—the reader is the most important; and they argued that hardness, toughness and quick drying, merely as such, were poor talking points. "What," they said, "is to prevent any other varnish manufacturer from making the same claims for his varnish? And how can you interest housewives in such technical features?"

The manufacturer admitted that he hadn't considered the subject in just that light.

At this point the manufacturer mentioned an apparently unimportant feature, namely, that the new varnish wouldn't turn white in water.

"There," said the ad men, "there is a real talking point—one that we can demonstrate in spectacular fashion. The housewife doesn't care so much for shortening by a few hours the time required for a varnished floor to dry. Her floors are varnished only once in a while at most. But if you tell her that a leak in the radiator won't affect the varnish on her floor, she'll be all attention."

The manufacturer was hard to persuade, for he had worked long in perfecting this new varnish and did not like to see its real merits apparently overlooked. However, he finally agreed that the advertising men should have their way, and that the technical appeal should be subordinated to the other. In a little while some very interesting advertising began to appear in the magazines. The illustration showed a demonstrator pouring boiling water upon a beautiful dining table, while the young housewife looked on with an air of great concern.

"One-Thousand-Dollar Varnish Test," the copy ran. "The Blank is a wonderful discovery in varnish-making. The boiling-water test shown above does not injure it. We offer $1,000 if it does. Neither will hot dishes hurt the varnish. To cleanse it—wash it. No fussing with smelly oils or waxes to keep it in fine condition."

The ad closed with an invitation to write at once for a free sample of the varnish and for a testing panel with which to try the advertiser's claims. Thousands of these samples were asked for. Undoubtedly a good many people made the test as directed, but it is probable that many more bought the varnish without going to the trouble of making the specified test. The sending of the panel served to prove the company's good faith.

Putting Sentiment in Milking

In their effort to get their ads read, it is not enough that the advertisers catch the reader's attention by means of illustrations and headlines. His interest must be aroused by the nature of the appeal, as described in Chapter IV of our assignment.

The advertising manager of a big Pennsylvania concern wanted to advertise a machine for milking cows. He could of course easily have described the new machine and proved by long columns of figures that it saved time and that its cost was low when compared with its durability, etc. But he didn't. He struck a different note. He crowded a big human interest appeal into his headline when he made it

read: "Why Dave Stayed on his Father's Farm." And the advertisement struck home. For on the farm, milking is the ever-present, monotonous task. It won't permit a boy to sleep late any morning, nor will it ever let him go away for a holiday. So burdensome is this milking job to the average farmer boy that probably more than any other one thing it is responsible for driving the boys from farming to seek work at something else. That the advertiser evidently had knowledge of these facts is witnessed by the copy he wrote. (See page 11).

Striking the Right Appeal

If sentiment can be successfully woven around a milking machine, the example ought to encourage others who have been wondering how to get human interest into their ads. Many more or less ingenious attempts at human interest appeals are being made by present-day advertisers. The manufacturer of talcum powder who pictures an infant with the wording "Mennen's for mine," is familiar to all. Crisco is recommended by a triumphant housewife who has just produced a delicious-looking cake, while spaghetti is made to appeal strongly to the beholder's appetite by the assuring smile of "Mistress Betty." When used with discrimination, such ideas are effective in an advertiser's hands, but it should ever be borne in mind that there is danger of striking the false note and thereby spoil the effect.

Chapters V-VII deal with a number of things that go to make the advertisement clearly understood and

Why Dave stayed on his father's farm

OLD MAN HICKS, the dairy farmer, had a herd of mighty fine cows. He also had a son named Dave who thought milking a pretty tough job, and who imagined he was getting washhanded end on the way to milkin's paralysis. So he laid down on the job and the old man had to milk all the kickers and fussy bovines.

Then one day Hicks, Sr., saw the Light. He installed a

SHARPLES MILKER

That was four years ago and ever since, twice a day, the herd has been machine-milked, the kickers and fussy producers give down without being chained, and Dave's doing the work formerly done by Dad and two husky hired hands.

Long ago the sun began partying in standing by and watching the last cup with the upward squeeze get Bossy's milk. When the pressure is yielding 30 pounds of fluid, the machine stacks to her and gets all of it. There are no finger nails gouging out a bit of hair or scratching her udder. She's not aware of men—she's never by. She no longer holds up her milk, for the machine does what human hands can't do—draws the milk intermittently with a soothing massage motion, driving the blood up and the milk down. And Bossy knows that's how she ought to be milked.

Dave's now dickering for a bigger dairy and another machine. The only way to run the bear or more

served at each end of the day is to put in more cows and increase the sum of Dad's bank roll.

Ask Old Man Hicks what the SHARPLES MILKER is and does. He'll say it's a clean milk-getter and a hold-on-to instead of drive-'em-off-the-farm proposition. He never has the least trouble in getting and keeping capable help. While Dave holds down the job, Hicks now has time to attend county fairs, conventions, parades, and—what he seldom did in the old grind-early-all-late day, s—go to events with Mrs. Hicks and mix with the neighbors and discuss politics and ways and means. "The jobs on Bossy these days," declares Hicks.

The same catalog that put Hicks in touch with the SHARPLES MILKER and prosperity is at your disposal. Why not ask for your copy?

The Sharples Separator Company
West Chester, Pa.

Chicago, Ill.
Dallas, Texas,
Minneapolis, Minn.

Kansas City, Mo.
Toronto, Ontario,
San Francisco, Cal.

Portland, Ore.
London, Eng.
Winnipeg, Can.

Agencies Everywhere

that induce action on the part of the reader. The various kinds of "appeal" that advertisers recognize are enumerated and discussed in a pointed manner. One such appeal is what is called "appeal to reason," in which cold facts are presented and no effort is made to introduce purely sentimental elements. But tho copy of that kind has its place in modern advertising, it should be remembered that it is not the only effective form of appeal. Suppose that Big Ben had been called "Alarmo," or that the Victrola had presented itself as an "Automatic Music Box!" Or suppose that the advertiser of Red Wing had labelled his wine "Unfermented Grape Juice," and had discoursed logically on the chemistry of fermentation or on the number of pounds pressure in his wine press. The enviable sales records of these articles could hardly have been reached by such means.

Human Interest in Farm Wagons

An advertiser of farm wagons hit upon a happy way to get human interest into his copy. He offered a series of prizes to the owners of Studebaker wagons that had been longest in service, and he featured the contest in a number of farm papers as well as in the firm's almanac. Entries soon began to come in from all over the United States. In all, several thousand wagons competed for the prizes. The winner of the first prize had a wagon of the advertiser's make that was forty-nine years old. So largely did the wagon-owners respond that it took a wagon thirty-six years

old to qualify for the sixty-eighth prize. Five hundred of the wagons entered were over twenty years old.

As a result of this plan, the company obtained thousands of testimonials. In fact, there is hardly a section of the country where the prospective buyer cannot be referred to a satisfied owner of an "old Studebaker." Not the least remarkable feature of the campaign was the fact that all this interest was created on an appropriation for prizes of only $100 in gold spread over sixty-eight prizes of which the largest was $20. As the manager of this advertising campaign pointed out in *Printer's Ink*, human interest was brought into play:

> The line of reasoning we used was that if we made the first prize larger, we would secure a lot of illegitimate entries which would necessitate considerable investigation with an increased expense. We also figured that if a man owned a Studebaker wagon which had given him excellent service for years, our offer would be an encouragement to him to let us know about his wagon, as the average person likes to have it proved that his judgment in buying some article was correct. We also wanted every entry to be an unsolicited testimonial of our products, as you might term it. With a first prize of only $20, the average owner sent in his entry more in the spirit of praise for our goods than with the prize in mind. The letters were from the heart and not padded; they told facts and not a lot of untruths.

This human interest appeal drew thousands of testimonials and furnished the makers with a wealth of good selling points that could be used in the regular advertising of the company.

Another advertiser, this time the manufacturer of an automatic revolver, had for several months been going strong on the appeal: "It's Mechanically Perfect;" but found that this did not get business. He changed the appeal to: "Protect Your Loved Ones," and pictured a masked burglar intruding into a pleasant home scene. This change in appeal made his shipping clerks busy.

A hosiery maker was told by dealers that the window displays he was sending them did not draw. He abandoned the still-life display, put out one which showed people moving, and found by actual count that the number of people who stopped to look at the window had increased eighty percent.

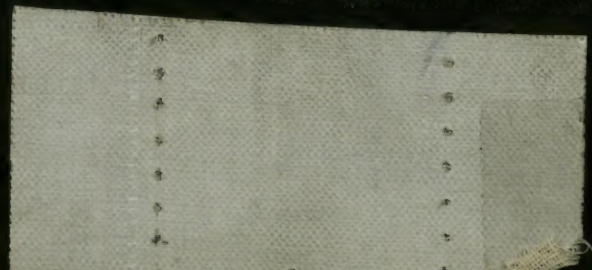
A department store was considering how to advertise its medium-priced pianos. The price appeal, the music appeal, all the usual attempts to move such goods were rejected. "Make Mary a Lady" the store announced, and the best day that the piano business ever had seen followed the use of this appeal.

> *The successful advertiser does not depend wholly upon an appeal to the intellect; he also seeks to touch the strings of the heart.*

In Chapter VIII, the discussion of word values will be found a very interesting one, since words are necessarily the tools with which the advertisement

writer works. Chapters IX-XI describe the kind of copy that is best suited for obtaining the order (IX), getting the inquiry (X), and directing the reader (XI). These chapters afford an insight into the reason which determines the choice of copy and appeal, and they are therefore of great value to the earnest student of advertising principles.

NO
26



UTL AT DOWNSVIEW
D RANGE BAY SHLF POS ITEM C
39 11 11 04 13 012 5